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A. Introduction

Saint Mary's College of California

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I. GENERAL ADMINISTRATION

A. Introduction

History of the College. In its second century of Christian education, Saint Mary's College is one of the oldest colleges in the West. Dedicated in San Francisco by Archbishop Joseph S. Alemany, O.P., in 1863, the Brothers of the Christian Schools assumed its operation in 1868 and have since then determined its character and growth. Under the laws of the State of California, the College was incorporated in 1872 and given a charter empowering it to confer degrees and to exercise all other privileges of a university. The campus was relocated in Oakland in 1889 and in Moraga in 1928. In 1941, the College instituted a liberal arts program whose core was the World Classics Seminar. In 1969, a 4-1-4 calendar and curriculum was adopted for the undergraduate program and in 1970 the College became co-educational.

The Brothers of the Christian Schools, founded by St. John Baptist de la Salle in France in 1680, are lay religious who live in community and devote their lives to the Christian education of youth. Forming the largest teaching congregation in the Church, with some 11,000 members teaching 830,000 students in 70 countries, the Brothers bring to their teaching a three-hundred year tradition of religious dedication, educational philosophy, scholarly preparation, and an eagerness to share with youth the excitement of learning.

The faculty of the College is composed of lay instructors, priests and Brothers. Members of the faculty are selected and promoted primarily for their dedication to and skill at teaching. The College aims at being a community of scholars, and while original research and publication are valued as contributions to intellectual vitality and self-renewal of faculty, they do not take precedence over active membership in the intellectual community of the College wherein dedication and commitment to good teaching is a hallmark. Saint Mary's does not accept a "publish or perish" model and its faculty is not pressured to a neglect of their teaching commitment in order to achieve professional advancement through publication. In general, the size of the College and the interests and dedication of its faculty makes for an extraordinarily close, informal, and personal relationship with students. The evaluation of the faculty is made primarily in terms of excellence in teaching, personal orientation to students, and commitment to the aims and ideals of the College.

The students are a reflection of the history of the College, for Saint Mary's seeks to provide higher education opportunities for various social classes, but particularly for those whose educational needs are, for various reasons, not satisfied elsewhere, and to which a proper and adequate response can be made. Reflecting the long Lasallian tradition of Christian education oriented to the needs of students, the College, at various times in its history, has included a Law School, a School of Commerce, an engineering department, as well as programs focusing specifically on the humanities. During the long history of the College, the expansion of both student population and academic programs has reflected the educational needs of students, for which the College exists. Though, since 1970, the College has steadily extended its service to a broader and more diverse community of learners in terms of age, experience, interests and educational needs, it seeks to keep a firm eye on its central academic aim: the development of the capacity of responsible independent thought.